

What is claimed is:

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1 1. A WDM optical communication system including an arrangement for
 2 assessing the polarization of each optical signal within a plurality of wavelength division
 3 multiplexed signals propagating along a transmission path, the arrangement comprising
 4 at least one in-line polarimeter disposed along and integral with said transmission
 5 path, said at least one in-line polarimeter configured to out-couple predetermined portions
 6 of each optical signal passing therethrough to collect information with respect to the state
 7 of polarization for each optical signal; and
 8 a network control element, responsive to the output from said at least one in-line
 9 polarimeter, for either one of modifying and controlling the polarization of one or more
 10 of said optical signals in response to the state of polarization information.

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 2 2. The WDM optical communication system as defined in claim 1 wherein the at
 3 least one in-line polarimeter comprises a plurality of in-line polarimeters.

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 5 3. The WDM optical communication system as defined in claim 1 wherein the at
 6 least one in-line polarimeter comprises a single in-line polarimeter.

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 8 4. The WDM optical communication system as defined in claim 1 wherein at
 9 least one in-line polarimeter comprises a partial polarimeter.

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 1 5. The WDM optical communication system as defined in claim 1 wherein at
 2 least one in-line polarimeter comprises a complete polarimeter.

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 4 ~~6. The WDM optical communication system as defined in claim 1 wherein the~~
 5 ~~system further comprises an RF tone generator for impressing a test RF signal onto one~~
 6 ~~or more preselected wavelengths within the plurality of wavelengths and using the in-line~~
 7 ~~polarimeter to determine the relative fraction of light incident on a particular detector~~
 8 ~~with respect to the test RF signal.~~

1 ~~7. The WDM optical communication system as defined in claim 1 wherein the~~
2 ~~system further comprises an RF tone generator for impressing a test RF signal onto one~~
3 ~~or more preselected polarizations with the plurality of optical signals and using the in-line~~
4 ~~polarimeter to determine the relative fraction of the light incident on a particular detector~~
5 ~~with respect to the test RF signal.~~

1 8. An active polarization control arrangement for use in an optical transmission
2 system, the active polarization control arrangement comprising
3 a polarization control element responsive to an input optical signal propagating
4 along an optical transmission path, the polarization control element for producing as an
5 output an optical signal exhibiting a predetermined state of polarization;
6 an in-line polarimeter formed as integral with the optical transmission path and
7 configured to out-couple signals determined by the state of polarization of the input
8 optical signal; and
9 a feedback control element disposed between the in-line polarimeter control
10 signal output and an adjustable input to the polarization control element, said feedback
11 control element for providing correction signal inputs to the polarization control element
12 based on the control signal outputs from the in-line polarimeter.

1 9. An active polarization control arrangement as defined in claim 8 wherein the
2 in-line polarimeter is defined as a complete in-line polarimeter and comprises a set of
3 four gratings incorporated in optical fiber, each set tilted at one of the predetermined
4 angles of 0°, 60°, 150°, and 90°, with a waveplate oriented at an angle of 30° with respect
5 to the optical axis disposed between the second and third grating.

1 10. An active polarization control arrangement as defined in claim 8 wherein the
2 in-line polarimeter is defined as a complete in-line polarimeter and includes a set of four
3 dielectric filters, each filter tilted at one of the predetermined angles of 0°, 60°, 150°, and
4 90°, with a waveplate oriented at an angle of 30° with respect to the optical axis disposed
5 between the second and third filter..

1 **11.** An optical transmission system comprising a transmitter for providing one or
2 more optical input signals, an optical transmission path and an optical receiver, said
3 optical transmission system further comprising

4 at least one active polarization control arrangement, each active polarization
5 control arrangement including

6 a polarization control element responsive to one or more input optical signals
7 propagating along the optical transmission path, the polarization control element for
8 producing as an output an optical signal exhibiting a predetermined state of polarization;

9 an in-line polarimeter integral with the optical transmission path configured to
10 out-couple signals determined by the state of polarization of the input optical signal; and

11 a feedback control element disposed in a signal path between the in-line
12 polarimeter control signal output and an adjustable input to the polarization control
13 element, said feedback control element for providing correction signal inputs to the
14 polarization control element based on the control signal outputs from the in-line
15 polarimeter.

16 **12.** An optical transmission system as defined in claim 11 wherein the optical
17 transmission path comprises at least a section of birefringent fiber and the active
18 polarization control arrangement is used to orient the polarization axes of the optical
19 output from the in-line polarimeter with the optical axes of the birefringent transmission
20 path fiber.

21 **13.** An optical transmission system as defined in claim 11 wherein the
22 transmission system further comprises a polarization beam splitter, disposed at the output
23 of the in-line polarimeter, the polarization control element utilized to adjust the output
24 signal state of polarization to align with one of the beamsplitter principal axes.

25 **14.** An active polarization control arrangement as defined in claim 11 wherein the
26 arrangement further comprises wavelength filters disposed at each output of the
27 polarization beam splitter to discriminate between two orthogonal channels with closely
28 spaced wavelengths.

1 **15.** The optical communication system as defined in claim 11 wherein the in-line
2 polarimeter of the active polarization control arrangement is a complete polarimeter and
3 comprises a set of four gratings incorporated in optical fiber, each set tilted at one of the
4 predetermined angles of 0°, 60°, 150°, and 90°, with a waveplate oriented at an angle of
5 30° with respect to the optical axis disposed between the second and third gratings.

1 **16.** The optical communication system as defined in claim 11 wherein the in-line
2 polarimeter of the active polarization control arrangement comprises a complete
3 polarimeter and includes a set of four dielectric filters, each filter tilted at one of the
4 predetermined angles of 0°, 60°, 150°, and 90°, with a waveplate oriented at an angle of
5 30° with respect to the optical axis disposed between the second and third filters.

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1 **17.** The optical communication system as defined in claim 14 wherein the at least
one active polarization control arrangement comprises a first arrangement disposed at an
optical transmitter and a second arrangement disposed at an optical receiver.

1 **18.** The optical communication system as defined in claim 11 wherein the least
one active polarization control arrangement comprises an in-line polarimeter located at
the optical receiver and the polarization controller located at the optical transmitter, using
a telemetry channel to transmit feedback information from the in-line polarimeter to the
polarization controller.